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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/797,269	03/10/2004	Kenneth David Harris JR.	033964-1090	2830

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EXAMINER

JAGAN, MIRELLYS

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2859

DATE MAILED: 02/10/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claim 25 is objected to because of the following informalities:

Claim 25 states that the main handle has spring-loaded contacts mating with second contacts on the handle portion. However, the specification discloses that the handle portion is the portion with the spring-loaded contacts and the main handle has the second contacts.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1, 2, 14, 15, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,412,398 to Norcross et al [hereinafter Norcross].

Referring to claims 1 and 2, Norcross discloses an apparatus for determining food temperature, the apparatus comprising:

a fork (24) having a plurality of tines (100, 102);

a temperature sensor (thermocouple) integral with the fork;

Art Unit: 2859

a main handle (106) connected to the fork (24) and forming one end of the apparatus (when separated as shown in figure 2);

a handle portion (22) removably connected to the main handle (106); and

a display (26) integral within the handle portion (22) and electronically connected to the temperature sensor;

wherein a temperature sensed by the temperature sensor is displayed by the display; and the main handle (106) has a first set of contacts (male electrical connectors) positioned to mate with a second set of contacts (female electrical connectors) in the handle portion (22) (see figures 1 and 2; column 4, lines 13-56; column 6, lines 55-63; column 7, lines 28-60; and column 7, line 67-column 8, line 7).

Referring to claims 14 and 15, Norcross discloses a method for cleaning an apparatus for determining food temperature, the apparatus comprising a piercing element, a temperature sensor integral with the piercing element, a main handle that is connected to the piercing element and forming one end of the apparatus (when separated as shown in figure 2), a handle portion removably connected to then main handle, and a display integral within the handle portion and electronically connected to the temperature sensor, the method comprising:

removing the main handle (22) from the handle portion (106);

washing the main handle attached to the piercing element by washing in a dishwasher (which must be initiated in order to wash the main handle); and

reattaching the main handle and the handle portion (see column 8, lines 48-64).

Referring to claim 17, Norcross discloses a system for determining food temperature, the system comprising:

a means (24) for sensing food temperature that is insertable into food items for sensing the temperature of the food;

a means (22) for holding the means for sensing food temperature;

a means (26) for displaying the temperature of the food, the means for displaying being positioned between two ends of the means for holding (22); and

reattaching means for temporarily separating the means for displaying (26) from the means for sensing (24), thereby permitting washing of the means for sensing (24) without damaging the means for displaying (26).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Norcross in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0097759 to Bond et al [hereinafter Bond].

Norcross discloses an apparatus having all of the limitations of claim 7, as stated above in paragraph 3, except for the material of the piercing element being stainless steel.

However, Bond discloses a fork (34A) having a removable handle for measuring the temperature of food, wherein the fork is made of is made of stainless steel, which Bond discloses

Art Unit: 2859

is a useful material for the fork since it is heat resistant and corrosion resistant material (see paragraph 42).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the apparatus of Norcross by making the piercing element (the fork) of stainless steel, as taught by Bond, in order to provide a piercing element that is resistant to heat and corrosion.

6. Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Norcross in view of U.S. Patent 3,742,602 to Brumwell.

Norcross discloses an apparatus having all of the limitations of claim 8, as stated above in paragraph 3, except for the material of the handle being aluminum.

Brumwell discloses a fork having a handle made of aluminum, which is a useful material since it is anodized in order to 'decorate' the handle by providing a color and a pattern on the surface of the handle (see column 1, lines 12-28, and column 2, lines 58-62).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the apparatus of Norcross by making the handle of aluminum, as taught by Brumwell, in order to provide a colored and patterned handle, thereby making the apparatus more aesthetically pleasing.

7. Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Norcross in view of U.S. Patent 5,066,242 to Martucci.

Norcross discloses an apparatus having all of the limitations of claim 12, as stated above in paragraph 3, except for the first set of contacts (male electrical connectors) in the main handle being spring-loaded. However, Norcross discloses that it is important to prevent water or moisture from entering the handle portion (22) since this will damage the electrical components therein (see column 4, lines 57-65, and column 7, line 63-column 8, line 4).

Martucci discloses an electrical connection technique having male and female contact portions for connecting together to provide electrical contact. The male portions are spring-loaded so that they seal the female contacts from the environment when the contacts are connected in order to protect the electrical connection from the environment, e.g., water (see figures 3 and 5; and column 2, lines 3-26).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the apparatus of Norcross by providing a spring-loaded first set of contacts (male) to mate with the second set of contacts, as taught by Martucci, in order to provide a seal in the second set (female) of contacts of the handle portion (22) when connecting them together to further protect the electrical components of the of the handle portion from water or moisture damage.

8. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Norcross.

Norcross discloses a method having all of the limitations of claim 16, as stated above in paragraph 3, except for the step of drying the main handle portion.

However, Norcross discloses that the purpose of providing a detachable handle is to separate the handle and its electronics from the apparatus during washing in order to prevent

Art Unit: 2859

water from damaging the electronics in the handle (see column 4, lines 57-65, and column 7, line 63-column 8, line 4).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to dry the main handle and the handle portion of the apparatus after washing before the step of reattaching them together in order to ensure that any water or moisture present after washing does not seep into and damage the electronic parts of the handle, as suggested by Norcross.

Allowable Subject Matter

9. Claims 21-24 are allowed.

10. Claim 25 would be allowable if amended to overcome the objections set forth in this Office action.

11. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

The prior art of record does not disclose or suggest the following in combination with the remaining limitations of the claims:

An apparatus for determining food temperature comprising a handle portion removably connected to the main handle, and a display integral within the handle portion (see claim 21).

Response to Arguments

Art Unit: 2859

12. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 12, and 14-17 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

13. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

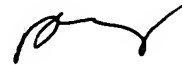
14. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mirellys Jagan whose telephone number is 571-272-2247. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 11AM to 5PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Diego Gutierrez can be reached on 571-272-2245. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 2859

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

MJ
February 3, 2006



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